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ABSTRACT

An evaluation among parents and teachers of an Experimental Progress Report Card was conducted. The study was carried out in eight elementary schools where the Report had been used to report student performance during the 1971-72 school year. A total of 53 teachers and 38 parents were included in the inquiry. Responses of both teachers and parents to the questionnaires suggested that the report card afforded a high degree of individualization. Most parents felt the instrument gave them a good picture of their child's progress. The majority of the parents preferred the new report card to the old card. More than half of the teachers surveyed felt the new care expressed a basically different philosophy--with which they agreed--personalization, individualization, and a lack of comparison and grading. However, most teachers felt revisions were necessary and expressly requested check lists for attitudes and skills. (Author/CK)

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ED 084278

Minneapolis Public Schools

An Evaluation of an Experimental Progress Report Card Used in Selected Elementary Public Schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota During 1971-1972

Conducted for Minneapolis Public Schools
by
The Augsburg College Social Science Research Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Ideas expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Minneapolis Public School Administration nor the Minneapolis School Board.

C-71-39
November 1972

Research and Evaluation Department
Educational Services Division
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Minneapolis Public Schools

An Evaluation of an Experimental Progress Report Card Used in Selected Elementary Public Schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota During 1971-1972

Summary

The Research and Evaluation Department of the Minneapolis Public Schools employed the Augsburg College Social Science Research Center to conduct an evaluation among parents and teachers of an Experimental Progress Report Card during May, 1972.

The study was carried out in eight elementary schools where the Report had been used to report student performance during the 1971-72 school year. Fifty-three teachers (40 users and 13 non-users) and 38 parents were included in the inquiry. Copies of the instruments that were used are attached to this report.

Responses among both teachers and parents generally suggested that the Report afforded a high degree of individualization. Most parents felt the instrument gave them a good picture of their child's progress. It conveyed their child's strengths and it specified areas where the child needed work, including examples of such areas. Although most parents felt they received sufficient information in the way the report was used, a few mentioned they would have liked more frequent reports during the year. The Report was seen as understandable. The majority of the parents preferred the new Report to the old card.

More than half of the teachers surveyed felt the new Report expressed a basically different philosophy -- with which they agreed -- personalization, individualization, and a lack of comparison and grading. However, 25 of the teachers indicated they would rather use some other reporting system than the new one. Reluctance to use the card generally was expressed because it was too time consuming to complete. This was particularly true in "continuous progress" and team teaching situations. Most teachers felt revisions were necessary and expressly requested check lists for attitudes and skills.

It is believed by the evaluation team that the following report contains sufficient information to substantiate revision of the Report prior to its broader implementation.

* * *

November 1972 Research and Evaluation Department

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Minneapolis Public Schools

An Evaluation of an Experimental Progress Report Card Used in Selected Elementary Public Schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota During 1971-1972

Background and Procedure

Eight Minneapolis elementary public schools participated in a pilot project using an experimental report card (Progress Report) during the 1971-72 school year. Schools using the report were determined by faculty vote. Included in the pilot project were:

Kenny
Page
Pratt-Motley
Morris Park
Schiller
Cleveland
Whittier

The Progress Report, (see Appendix A, page 11), devised by Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Carlson* and school representatives, consists of a triplicate, carboned sheet, the front of which is divided vertically into two reporting periods and horizontally into six subject areas listed on the left-hand margin: Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social and Physical Sciences, Music and Art, and Physical and Personal Development. Subject reporting spaces (approximately 3-1/2" x 1-1/2") are blank, except for Reading, which has a fill-in line for reading series and reading level of the child. The child's name, teacher's name, and reporting dates are also included on the front of the Report. The back side of the Report includes conference dates, the child's room and assignment for the following year, plus names of the teacher, school, and principal. A short message is included, stating this is an experimental card which supplements conferences.

The original of the Report is given to parents at the first reporting period, the duplicate at the second period, and the triplicate is retained in the pupil's cumulative record.

Participating teachers received an information handbook on the Progress Report, which gives helps and suggestions on the Report and on parent-teacher conferences.

An evaluation survey to determine parents' and teachers' reactions to the Progress Report was conducted during the month of May, 1972.

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* Dr. James Kennedy was Associate Superintendent of Elementary Education and Dr. Mildred Carlson was Consultant in Elementary Curriculum at the time this study was conducted.

Faculty representatives from participating schools provided a point of contact to facilitate survey implementation. Representatives, principals and faculties of the eight schools were found to be highly cooperative with the survey team, from the Augsburg College Social Science Research Center.

The sampling approach for each school was determined by individual representatives to include both users and non-users of the Progress Report. Kenny, Cleveland and Schiller schools employed faculty meetings as a mechanism for distribution of survey forms to teachers for completion and return (See Appendix B, Teacher Survey, page 14). The ungraded schools, Pratt-Motley, received the forms through the Elementary School Assembly Committee representatives. Page, Kenny, Morris Park and Whittier faculties received the forms directly from a survey representative.

At the time of the survey, the Progress Report had been employed for at least one marking period during the year in all schools but Kenny and Whittier. At Kenny, four faculty members employed the Progress Report to a limited degree; that is, the faculty had generally voted to use parent conferences during the year and the Progress Report for the final marking period at the end of the year. One Whittier faculty member sent out Progress Reports to all his students at the end of the second marking period. The balance of the Whittier faculty voted to employ the forms for the final marking period only. Only one faculty member at Page School determined not to use the Progress Report, electing to use parent conferences instead. Among non-users in several of the schools, the Progress Report was employed only in cases of student transfers to other schools.

(Note: Originally Hawthorne School was to have been included in the survey. However, no survey was conducted there due to the fact that the faculty had voted to use the Report for the final marking period only.)

A form was included with each teacher survey for the purpose of ascertaining names of three parents who had received the Report and had participated in a parent-teacher conference. From these names, interviewers selected one parent to interview. (See Appendix C, Parent Interview Questionnaire, page 21.) Parent interviews were successfully completed with parents relating to all but two of the teachers who had used the Report. In all 38 in-the-home interviews, mothers were the respondents,

appointments having been arranged by telephone. In the South and Southeast schools, except in a single instance where the mother was detained by a doctor's appointment, all appointments were kept as scheduled. Callbacks were necessary in several cases with Cleveland and Schiller communities. Parental interviews ranged from 20 to 45 minutes in duration. In some instances, there was a tendency for mothers to see the interviewer in a "counselor" role or to stress discussing children in lieu of the reporting system being examined. This seemed to occur for the most part where questioning was of a probing nature, e.g., questions #13-15. Parents were generally receptive and cooperative with the interviewing process.

Instrumentation

A pool of evaluation questions with suggestions for response sources was prepared by the ESA Committee on Reporting to Parents. These questions, denoting areas of evaluation concern, were rated as to their importance by the Committee and Dr. Kennedy. Questionnaires based on the evaluation questions receiving high ratings were prepared for the 1972 survey by the Research Department and the Augsburg Social Science Research Center. The committee has recommended that some of the evaluation areas included in the present survey be given priority for long-range evaluation.

Ten questions received high importance ratings by both the Committee and Dr. Kennedy. (These questions, listed with the survey results, were stressed in the present survey.)

Other areas receiving priority were:

Is the new card more effective than the old card?
Does the card describe what the child needs to work on?
Is the card accomplishing what it was intended to?

Items not included in this initial survey are:

What was the reason for the change from the old card?
What are the criteria for a good written report?
Should we have one style of written report for the whole city?
Is the cost a factor?
Do parents appreciate the comparison aspect built into the card?

Interviews with parents, participating teachers and non-participating teachers have been conducted during the initial survey to provide answers to priority questions. Other approaches to evaluation suggested by the committee and Dr. Kennedy are student interviews and Reading Ease Measures.

Responses - High Importance Questions

The ESA Committee and Dr. Kennedy rated ten questions for high importance in the Progress Report survey. The following results are indicated from the 1972 survey:

1. How well does the card describe the status of the individual child?

Responses indicate the new experimental report afforded a high degree of individualization. Teachers and parents generally concurred in their opinion.

2. Does the card give honest information about individuals?

Yes. Virtually all parents interviewed felt the evaluation fit their children. Teachers indicated the card provided an opportunity to be specific for strengths, weaknesses and needed areas of improvement for the child.

3. Does the card describe the child's progress in curriculum areas?

Yes, Most parents felt they had a good picture of their children's progress. Five teachers also volunteered this view in an open end question.

4. Does the card convey to parents that the teacher is aware of the child's needs?

The majority of parents indicated that the teacher specified areas where the child needed work and included examples of such areas. Examples were given for the personal development of the child as well as basic skills in subjects.

5. Do parents feel they have received sufficient information?

Generally, yes. A few parents indicated they would like to have several reports throughout the year.

6. Do parents understand what the teacher is trying to convey?

Thirty-six of the 38 parents interviewed indicated the report was understandable.

7. Does the specific information about reading tell the parents something they understand?

Numerous parents indicated they had questions on the reading level and several on the reading series.

8. Is the reading level important?

Questions from the parents suggested they <u>were</u> concerned about the level at which their child was reading and/or the teacher's assessment of the reading level.

9. Does this card really fit different organizational patterns?

Teachers in continuous progress and team teaching situations generally expressed the most difficulty because of the large number of forms to complete. Some of these faculty members had more than 100 forms to send out. The special areas such as music, art and physical education were, in some instances, omitted from the reports.

10. Does the card convey direction for the child?

Yes. Parents felt teachers generally specified children's strengths and also their needs and areas in which they could be helped. The report in all instances was received between February and early April which afforded some opportunities for parents to relate to such needs.

High priority rating for evaluation was also given to the question "is the new card more effective than the old card?" Teachers were divided on the parent-teacher "communication" aspect of the new card. However, a majority of the teachers surveyed indicated there was a basically different philosophy underlying the use of the Report with which they were in agreement.

Results - Parents (See Appendix D, page 25.)

Of the 38 parents interviewed, 31 indicated favorable reactions to the Report. This category was characterized by responses ranging from "better than old," "o.k.", the most frequent response "I liked it" to "excellent" and "very helpful." Negative responses included such reactions as "not good" and "prefer another form."

Thirty of the respondents indicated that the card did let them know "how the child is doing." Parents generally indicated that the teacher specified areas where their children needed more work. Of the eleven who indicated that the card did not tell them that their child needed to do more work, five or six of these stated that their children were in fact doing well in all areas. Most parents interviewed had taken the teacher suggestions and had worked with their children where specified. Problem areas dealt not only with subject material but also with particular attitudes seen to be held by the children.

Only one of the parent respondents indicated that the Report was not understandable. Generally, when this question was probed, "Was there anything you didn't understand?" the response was negative, but there were several responses indicating questions on the reading levels. Most

respondents were emphatically positive that the report did indeed fit their child as they saw him. Thirty-four responded "yes" to this item, one "no" and three felt the information applied generally. When asked if the card described the child as he really is, 35 indicated that it did, two were uncertain and one stated "no."

Parents acknowledged that they felt teachers must have truly gotten to know their children prior to preparing the reports. (However, it was noted in the analysis that three of the reports prepared by one teacher were highly similar. This teacher was able to prepare such reports in five to ten minutes.)

Twenty-seven mothers indicated they had received a good picture of their child's progress. Others generally suggested that they were not able to determine how their child ranked academically and socially in comparison with other students or themselves. Asked whether they would like to continue receiving this type of report, 30 responded "yes."

Suggestions for a better reporting system included returning to letter grades or conferences. Only one parent interviewed had a conference with the teacher after a Progress Report had been received. (This conference was not related to the material contained in the Report.)

When copies of the Report actually received by the parent were presented, 25 indicated they had no questions, four questioned the reading levels, five had queries concerning other subject areas such as the mechanics of the report, e.g., "Is the conference one of the reporting periods?" After probing, several other questions were raised. One parent indicated difficulty in explaining the report to her child, another indicated she felt the Report should still include such data as absences and tardy records. Still another mother (who herself had been a teacher) suggested that teachers should not employ educational jargon in their reports.

To determine if there were questions on the "Reading" listing, several preliminary leading questions were employed. These were found to generate responses repetitious in nature, sometimes inapplicable to the question. For example, when asked if there were questions on subjects listed on the left hand side of the Report, several parents became subjective saying, "They all apply to my child" or "I have no way of knowing where my child ranks." Twenty-eight indicated they had no questions.

Upon asking the specific question concerning comments on reading, 26 of the 38 parents did have questions. Eighteen respondents had questions on reading levels, two on reading series and six on problems of their children. The other subjects questioned were generally regarding non-completed music, art and physical education categories by the teacher.

Several persons indicated they did not feel teachers gave sufficiently specific comments; three said they didn't understand terms used; for example, the "math" category. Many parents indicated the new report gave them a better picture of their children's progress as compared to the old form. The Teachers' comments and explanations were preferred to the impersonal checks entered on the old card. Two parents indicated they preferred the individual appraisal rather than a comparative report. Seven mothers felt they liked the format of the card. Ten said there wasn't anything on the new card they perferred to the old and three expressed themselves to the effect that the card portrayed where the child needs help.

The Reports had generally been sent out after conferences had occurred and parents received them in February, March or early April. Twenty-five of the 38 parents had received the reports in March. Over half of the parents responded they would like the report by the middle of the school year.

Results - Teachers (See Appendix E, page 31.)

Among the 53 teachers surveyed, 40 had used the new report; 13 were non-participants. Among the 40 participants, one was a first-year teacher, eight had taught two or three years, 30 had taught four or more years, and one did not respond. The Reports were used in all cases between February and April. Only one of the 53 indicated she would not use the Progress Report for the final end-of-the-year reporting period. She intended to have another parent-teacher conference. Eleven of the non-participants had used the new form in instances where parents were not available for conferences or as a transfer report where pupils were transferring from the school. Non-participation prior to the final reporting period was a faculty decision in several of the schools. One teacher wrote letters to parents in addition to holding conferences.

Nearly half of the teachers surveyed (25) indicated they would rather use some other reporting system than the new one; eight preferred the old card, five chose the new Report, and two did not answer the question. The lack of positive response to the new card was shown in a number of ways on the teacher survey.

Thirty-two of the 40 participants termed the report too time consuming. The survey shows that most teachers spent from one-half to one hour preparing each Report. Five reported an hour or more on individual reports. A number of the teachers expressed difficulties in the mechanics of the card -- writing hard enough to make a legible third copy was seen as practically impossible. The non-graded schools found the card difficult to use because they had so many to complete. Unless the Reports were passed around to individual teachers, special interest areas such as physical education, music and art would not be covered. Some teachers felt they began to use stock phrases because it was difficult to portray the "average" child or to be positive with children having difficulty in school. A number felt the card was not well organized, with comments ranging from "the space is too long" to "the space is too small," and many pointed out the need for a check list for attitudes and skills.

Most frequent response in favor of the new Report form was "I can be more specific regarding the strengths, weaknesses and areas of needed improvement for each child." Nine felt the new form yielded a more individualized report; five indicated it provided a good picture of the child's progress; two believed it better because there were no grading comparisons. Other responses included "more positive" "more meaningful" "more descriptive" and "more informative."

Twenty-four of the 40 participants felt there is a basically different philosophy underlying the use of the new Report. They emphasized that the Progress Report is personal, individual, with positive emphasis and no grading on comparison. More than half of the teachers participating agreed with this philosophy.

Teachers were divided on whether the old or the new card provides better parent-teacher communication. Fourteen responded "old," 14 "new," and others indicated they didn't know or that neither was better.

Suggested alternatives to the cards included parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher-student conferences, check-lists of basic academic skills, a check-list of social attitudes, a combination of the old and new methods with spaces for comments on subject materials and check lists for attitudes. One teacher specifically mentioned the report card used in the Fridley elementary schools as an alternative.

Digest of Findings

- Four out of five teachers surveyed had used the P.R. for at least one reporting period.
- The users felt the P.R. was particularly good because it is individualized and can specifically portray children's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
- Most teachers termed the report too time consuming, requiring too much writing and therefore impractical. Half of the teachers indicated it required between 30-60 minutes to complete each report.
- 30 teachers indicated a use of mixed phrases (stock and individual) in completing the reports.
- Three out of four of the teachers had taught 4 or more years.
- 38 had experienced using the old card.
- Some kind of checklist was the aspect most frequently mentioned as missing on the P.R.
- A majority of the teachers indicated the new card expressed a basically different philosophy from the old card. The philosophy was described as individualization, with a positive emphasis, stressing no peer comparison or letter grading.
- Most teachers want some other reporting system than the new or the old. A combination of the two or checklists and spaces for comments were most frequently listed as the alternatives.
- Non-participants generally had made decision to use the P.R. for the final reporting period only.
- Parent interviews consisted of 38 mothers who had received the report and had had a conference with the teacher.
- Only 4 of the 38 parents surveyed indicated they preferred the old reporting system.
- Most parents felt the report fit the child and presented a good picture of his progress.
- Questions on the reading level were those most frequently raised.
- The new card was preferred because the teacher's explanation gave a better understanding of the child's progress.
- Most parents claimed they had helped their child as a result of the specific comments on the progress report.
- The modal month for distribution of the Reports was March. (Most parents would like to receive the Report by the middle of the year.)

APPENDIX A

PROGRESS REPORT

(In actual usage, the Report is a triplicate, carboned sheet)

CONFERENCES about your child were held

_____

_____

_____

This is an experimental progress report to supplement conferences held this year. If you would like additional information please call. Your suggestions for improving our reporting procedures are appreciated.

Your child is assigned to _____

for the next school year. His/her home room will

be _____.

SCHOOL	TEACHER	PRINCIPAL
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

NAME _____

PROGRESS

REPORT

school year _____ _____

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINNEAPOLIS MINNESOTA

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

The family, home and school are vital factors in the educational progress of your child. We must all work together for his best physical, mental and social growth.

We hope this card will tell you how your child is progressing. If you wish to discuss this further, feel free to consult with his teacher. We are always glad to plan a personal conference with you.

John B. Davis, Jr.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

PROGRESS REPORT

NAME _____

1st Report ☐ 2nd Report ☐ 3rd Report

READING	Reading Series _____ At the beginning of the school year your child's reading level was _____ At present your child's reading level is _____ .	At present your child's reading level is _____ .
LANGUAGE ARTS, INCLUDING LISTENING, SPEAKING, WRITING		
MATHEMATICS		
SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES		
MUSIC AND ART		
PHYSICAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT		
	Teacher _____ Date _____	Teacher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey

Minneapolis Public Schools
Elementary Progress Report
Experimental Card Evaluation

Teacher Survey

A. Which method of reporting to parents have you used this year (which do you expect to use for the final report)? Circle as many as apply:

	Early Fall	First Report About December	Second Report Feb. to April	Final (Expect to use)
1. Group conference	1	2	3	4
2. Individual conference	1	2	3	4
3. Experimental progress report	1	2	3	4
4. Regular Progress Report	1	2	3	4
5. Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4

IF THE RESPONDENT HAS NOT USED THE EXPERIMENTAL REPORT ASK QUESTIONS B THROUGH E.

IF THE RESPONDENT HAS USED THE EXPERIMENTAL REPORT, SKIP TO QUESTION E.

B. Did you make an attempt to use the Experimental Card or didn't you try it at all?

6. ____Yes, tried it No, did not try it _____

C. 7. Ask, (If not tried) was there any particular reason why you did not try it?

_____

_____

D. Do you plan to try the Experimental Card for the final report this Spring?

8. ___Yes No_____ Other _____

E. Is there anything else you would like to say about the Experimental Card?

_____

_____

_____

F. How extensively have you used the Experimental Card?

9. ___ A great deal ___ Frequently ___ Not very much ___ Hardly at all

G. From your point of view as a teacher, what is particularly good about this card?

10. _____

_____

H. From your point of view as a teacher, what is particularly bad about this card?

11. _____

_____

I. As you think about the child, what is particularly good about this card?

12 _____

_____

J. What is particularly bad (i.e. harmful or unjust to the child) about the card?

13 _____

_____

K. How did you introduce the Experimental Card to the parents?

14. 1 ___ Individual

2 ___ Group

3 ___ Sent home

4 ___ Other

L. Do you have any way of knowing that the parent did receive the card?

15. _____ Yes No ___

Do you think there should be a provision for this on the card?

16. _____ Yes No ___

Comments: _____

M. Have you had any experiences where the parents did not receive the card you sent home?

17. None ___ One or two ___ A few ___ Many ___

N. If a conference were held after the parent received an Experimental Progress Report Card, did you feel that most parents <u>really</u> understood the comments on the card?

18. 1 ___No such conferences held

2 ___Yes, most parents understood

3 ___No, most parents did not understand

Comments _____

_____

O. Have many parents asked for clarification of the Experimental Progress Report, or did just a few, or didn't any?

19. 1 ___Many

2 ___Just a few

3 ___None

P. Were there any specific aspects of the report which seemed to cause confusion among parents?

20. ___No

___ Yes (If <u>Yes</u>,) which aspects? _____

_____

Q. Did parents have difficulty in understanding comments on any of the curriculum areas or not? What about Reading? Did parents have any difficulty in understanding the comments on reading?

		<u>Yes-Difficulty</u>	<u>No Difficulty</u>
21.	Reading	1	2
22.	Language Arts	1	2
23.	Mathematics	1	2
24.	Social and Physical Sciences	1	2
25.	Music and Art	1	2
26.	Physical and personal development	1	2

R. Did parents have any difficulty in understanding the information on the Reading Series and the Reading Level or not?

27. ___Yes, most had difficulty

___Yes, some had difficulty

___No Comments: _____

___Other answer _____

S. Did you find that some curriculum areas were more difficult to make comments on than others?

28. ___Yes

___No

(If Yes):

Which areas presented particular difficulty and why do you think they did?

29. 1 ___Reading_____

30. 2 ___Language Arts _____

31. 3 ___Mathematics_____

32. 4 ___Social and Physical Sciences _____

33. 5 ___Music and Art _____

34. 6 ___Physical and personal development _____

Comments: _____

_____

T. Did you feel that there were some comments about the child which you would rather not write on the Progress Report, but which you would prefer to cover in a conference?

35. 1___Yes 2___No

Comment: _____

_____

U. Do you feel that this reporting system is a practical one?

36. 1___Yes 2___No

(If not) Why not? _____

V. About how long, on the average, does it take you to complete one progress report?

37. _____

W. Were you able to communicate truly individualized judgments about each child, or did you find yourself repeatedly using "stock" phrases?

38. 1___Individual 2___Stock Phrases 3___Mixed, some individual, some stock

X. How is your school organized?

39. 1___K-6

2___Continuous progress primary

3___Other, specify _____

Y. How did the organization of the school personnel affect your use of the card?

40. _____

Z. Did you receive adequate instructions on how to use the Experimental Progress Report?

41. 1___No instructions received

2___Instructions were not adequate

3___Instructions were adequate

Comments: _____

_____

AA. In what way did you use the Teacher Handbook?

42. 1___Never got one

2___Got one, but did not use it

3___As a general reference

4___As a source for specific comments to be used when applicable.

BB. How long have you been teaching?

43. 1___First year

2___2-3 years

3___4 or more years

CC. Have you had experience using the old (Minneapolis) card as well as this Experimental Card?

44. 1___Yes

2___No

DD. (If Yes): which card do you think parents prefer?

45. 1___the old one 2___the Experimental Card

3___neither one 4___other (specify) _____

Comments: _____

EE. Were there some things on the old card you liked which are not on the Experimental Card:

46. 1___Yes 2___No

If Yes, Describe _____

FF. Are there things on the Experimental Card you like which were not on the old card?

47. 1___Yes 2___No

If Yes, Describe

GG. Do you feel that there is a basically different philosophy underlying the use of this card compared with the old card?

48. 1___Yes 2___No

If Yes, What? _____

Do you agree with this philosophy or not?

49. 1___Yes 2___No

HH. Which card, the old or the Experimental, provides the better parent-teacher communications?

50. 1___Old 2___New

Which card do you prefer to use?

51. 1___Old 2___New

Why? _____

II. Would you like to continue using:

52. 1___This report

2___The old report

3___Some other kind of report

Describe _____

APPENDIX C

Parent Interview Questionnaire

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

ELEMENTARY PROGRESS REPORTING EVALUATION

School _____ PARENT INTERVIEW

This is a card we have not used before. We are trying it this year to see if it is more meaningful to parents than the card (show sample) we used previously. We would like to know how you feel about this card.

Is this the home of _____?

Are you the child's ___Mother ___Father ___Other

How old is _____? _____

How many school age children are there in this family? _____

1. Do you remember receiving a Progress Report card - like this one - for _____ recently?

   ___Yes ___No ___Don't know

2. Have you had a conference with _____'s teacher this year - either before or after you received the card?

   Yes, before _____ Yes, after _____ No ____ (end interview_

   Both before and after _____

3. What was your reaction to this card when you first received it?

   _____

   _____

4. Did the card let you know how well your child is doing?

   _____

   _____

5. Did the card tell you about any specific areas in which your child needed to do more work?

   Yes _____ No _____

   Probe: Can you give an example?

   _____

6. Did you have trouble reading the writing or not?

   Yes _____ No ____

7. Was the report understandable or not?

Yes ___ No ___

Was there anything you didn't understand about it?

_____

8. Do you think the information really "fit" your child -- or do you think the report was one that could really have been applied to any child?

Yes _____ No _____ Applied generally _____

9. Do you think the information on the card describes your child as he really is?

Yes _____ No _____

10. After reading the Progress Report, did you really feel that you had a good picture of your child's progress?

_____

11. Would you like to continue receiving this kind of report -- or would you like to receive the old report? Can you suggest some other kind of report?

Old _____ New _____

Can you suggest a reporting system that is better than either the old or new report ?

_____

_____

12 (If Conference was held after)

Did you discuss the Card in the conference?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't remember _____

If Yes-- What did you discuss about the card?

_____

Did you get the same picture of your child's progress from the conference as you did from the Progress Report Card?

Yes _____ No_____

If No -- How did the information differ?

_____

13. Here is a copy of the Card which was sent you. Do you have any questions about anything on this card?

_____

Anything else: (Probe) _____

14. Down the left hand side six subjects are listed. Do you have any questions about any of these subjects?

(wait for spontaneous response)

15. Do you have any questions about the comments on Reading?

Repeat for each subject not previously mentioned

16. Was there anything on the old card which you liked, which is not on the new card?

17. Is there anything on the new card you like which was not on the old card?

18. Have you done anything special to help your child as a result of comments on the Progress Report

___Yes ___No ___Don't know

If Yes, what?

19. About how long ago did you get this Progress Report (i.e. what month?)

20. At what time of the year would the report be most useful?

21. Do you have anything else you want to comment on about the report card?

APPENDIX D

Responses to Parent Interview Questionnaire

Responses to Parent Interview **Questionnaire**

38 participants

1. All mothers participated in interview.

2. Children ranged in age from 6 through 11.

3. School age children in family

   One -6
   Two - 14
   Three - 10
   Four - 8

Interview questions

1. Do you remember receiving a Progress Report card like this one recently?

   Yes - 38

2. Have you had a conference with the teacher this year either before or after you received the card?

   Yes, before - 36
   Yes, after - 1
   Yes, before and after - 1

3. What was your reaction to this card when you first received it?

   I liked it - 10
   o.k.- 2
   Very good, excellent - 8
   Helpful -- better than old - 11
   Not good -- prefer other -- not sure - 7

4. Did the card let you know how well your child is doing?

   Yes - 30
   Not really -- negative responses - 8

5. Did the card tell you about any specific areas in which your child needed to do more work?

   Yes -
   No -

   Examples - reading, math, (including many specific areas of math) spelling, social attitudes, proper usages of time.

6. Did you have trouble reading the writing or not?

Yes - 0
No - 38

7. Was the report understandable?

Yes - 36
No - 1
Maybe - 1

(When the question was rephrased and asked again, several respondents questioned some of the subject areas, with the most frequent question being about the reading levels.)

8. Do you think the information really "fit" your child or could it be applied generally?

Fit child - 34
Did not fit child - 1
Applies generally - 3

9. Do you think the information on the card describes your child as he really is?

Yes - 35
No - 1
Unsure - 2

10. After reading the Progress Report, did you <u>really</u> feel that you had a good picture of your child's progress?

Yes - 27
No - 3
Not really - 2
Fair - 1
Should show rank on card - 5

11. Would you like to continue receiving this kind of report or would you like to receive the old report?

Old - 4
New - 30
Unsure - 4

Can you suggest a reporting system that is better than either the old or new?

Very few participants had alternate systems to suggest. Seven indicated conferences, four indicated the marking system.

12. If Conference was held after the Progress Report .

Blank - 36 Two indicated they had conferences after the card. One was not related to the card; the other did discuss the card because there was a "possibility of a problem."

13. Here is a copy of the Card which was sent you. Do you have any questions about anything on this card?

No - 25 and nothing after probing
No - 4 but after probing raised questions on: reading level, trouble explaining the card to the child, teacher talking to children about the report, and why the absence and tardy record was not included.
Yes - 4 questions on reading level
Yes - 5 various questions, including: teachers shouldn't use "trade" vocabulary, whether conferences are one of the reporting periods, disagreement about child's math ability, why there wasn't more social and emotional information included, and whether the card should be returned.

14. Down the left hand side six subjects are listed. Do you have any questions about any of these subjects? (Wait for spontaneous response?

No questions - 28
No way of knowing the rank of the child - 2
All applies to my child -1
Emphasis on reading and math - 1
These are basic skill areas -1
Didn't realize art was a "specific subject" - 1
Need more science - 1
Reading, as indicated before - 2
Need more social behavior listings - 1
Math, as indicated before - 1

15. Do you have any questions about the comments on Reading?

No questions - 12
Questions on the reading level - 18
Questions on series - 2
Question of child's ability or rank - 3
Comments on children - 2
Questions on getting supplemental reading material - 1

15. (continued) Questions on other subjects:

No questions - 21
Music and art not completed - 6
Phy ed not completed - 5
Some comments are not specific - 2
It gives specific comments - 2
Would like a math rating - 1
Teacher's assumptions not in agreement with mine - 2
Physical fitness stressed - 1
Doesn't give capability of child - 1
Felt phrases were educational jargon - 1
Spelling comment question - 1

16. Was there anything on the old card which you liked which is not on the new card?

No - 21
Reading level - 1
More work habits and social attitudes - 9
Need card returning instruction - 1
Grade levels - 2
Math level - 1
Format - 1
Days absent and tardy - 2
Not much difference in cards - 1
Health and safety practices - 1

17. Is there anything on the new card you like which was not on the old card?

Everything about it - 1
No - 10
Generally the same - 2
Teacher's explanation - gives better understanding of child's progress - 11
Prefer comments to checks - 1
Individual appraisal rather than comparison - 2
Format - 6
New card is more personal - 7
Shows where child needs help - 3
I liked the supplemental letter grades the teacher added - 1

18. Have you done anything special to help your child as a result of comments on the Progress Report?

Yes - 25
No - 13

Help given was indicated as finishing assignments, 3; help with math, reading, spelling and language, 19; social attitudes, 3; support, 1.

19. About how long ago did you get this Progress Report(i.e. what month?)

February - 8
March - 25
April - 5

20. At what time of the year would the report be most helpful?

Closer to the beginning of the year - 8
By the middle of the year - 12
End of year - 3
Two reports a year - 2
More than two reports a year - 4
At the middle and end of year - 3
February or March - 6

21. Do you have anything else you want to comment on about the Progress Report?

No - 9
I like it - 14
Don't care for it - 1
We need competition and/or comparison - 3
Card could replace conference - 2
Prefer A,B,C,D - 2
Mothers like the new card better than fathers - 1
Need instructions on return - 1
Could be very negative - 1
There should be a place for signature - 1
Not good for children that aren't doing well - 3
Tells where child needs help - 1
No place on card for child's special interests - 1
Lots of unnecessary work for the teachers - 1
I prefer it to the old card - 3
My child liked it - 1
I like the two reports side by side to show progress - 1
The old card is no good - 1
Give the teachers extra time to complete it - 1
All the child's teachers should write on the report - 1
It's o.k. for smaller children - 1
It must be time consuming for teachers - 3
We need more reports throughout the year - 1
Value of the card depends on the teacher - 3

APPENDIX E

Responses to Teacher Survey

RESPONSES TO TEACHER SURVEY 40 users
13 non-users

A. Which method of reporting to parents have you used this year (which do you expect to use for the final period0? Circle as many as apply:

	Early Fall	First Report about December	Second Report Feb. to April	Final Report (expect to use)
1. Group conference	28	1	3	-
2. Individual conference	24	32	37	-
3. Experimental progress report	1	10	40	# 52
4. Regular progress report	-	-	-	-
*5. Other (specify)	1	1	-	-

* (5) One teacher wrote a letter to parents after the fall conference and in Dec. One teacher indicated using phone calls when the need arose.

(3) Only one of the 53 teachers surveyed did not indicate the use of the Progress Report at the end of theyear.

(NON USERS - ITEMS B THROUGH E)

B. Did you make an attempt to use the Experimental Card or didn't you try it?

Yes - 10 For transfers out - 4; for parents not at conferences - 2

No - 3

C. If not tried, was there any particular reason why you did not try it?

I prefer conferences - 1

Our school planned to use it at the end of the year only - 2

D. Do you plan to try the Experimental Card for the final report this Spring?

Yes - 13

E. Is there anything else you would like to say about the Experimental Card?

Parents prefer marks - 2
Need reporting back system -2
Too readable to children - 1
Too time consuming - 10
Need work habits space - 2
Better than old card - 2
No feedback from parents - 2
How should cards be sent to parents? -1
Too general - 1
Old card is better - 2
Need space for present and absent days - 1
Carbons are difficult to work with - 7

F. How extensively have you used the Experimental Card?

A great deal - 22
Frequently - 6
Not very much - 7
Hardly at all - 2
Pilot school - first year - 1
Not answered - 2

G. From your point of view as a teacher, what is particularly good about this card?

Can be very specific for strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement - 14
Good picture of child's progress - 5
Individualized - 7
Not comparing with others or grading - 2
Subject matter can be explained better - 2
Nothing - 4
Left blank - 3
More positive - 1
More imformative - 1
More complete - 3
More meaningful - 2
More descriptive - 2
Slightly better than old - 1
Parents can retain - 1
Better reading evaluation - 1
More space for comments - 1

H. From your point of view as a teacher, what is particularly bad about this card?

Too time consuming -- too much writing - 32
Card is not well organized - 4
No comparison - 3
Too many reports - 2
Too hard in non-graded situation - 5
Ommission of attitudes - 1
Need checklist for skill areas - 3
Mechanically difficult - carbon not good - 4
Using stock phrases - 2
Space on card too small - 7
Space on card too large - 3
Average child hard to portray - 1
Need to know parents received it - 2
Too subjective - 1
Difficult to be positive with kids having trouble - 2

Teacher Survey

I. As you think about the child, what is particularly good about the card?

No comment - 8
Good for good student, bad for poor - 1
Specific; helps because it's individual - 20
Eliminated grades - 2
Helps child work on definite areas - 1
More positive - 5
More descriptive - 1
Better evaluation - 1
Nothing good about it - 1
Better for slow child - 1

J. What is particularly bad (i.e. harmful or unjust to the child) about the card?

No place for parent feedback - 2
Music and art comments could stifle creativity - 1
Doesn't portray strengths and weaknesses - 3
Card hard to discuss at home - 1
Teacher judgment could be bad - 2
Too wordy - 2
Hard to understand - 4
No comment - 12
Comments could hurt child - 2
Not comprehensive - 2
Nothing - 6
Not specific - 1
Teacher's use of professional jargon - 1
Does not motivate child - 1
No comparison - 2
Too positive - 2
Days absent and tardy needed - 1

K. How did you introduce the Experimental Card to the parents?

Individual - 14
Group - 21
Sent home - 5
Other - 2 (Letter - 1; school board member - 1)

L. Do you have any way of knowing that the **parent** did receive the card?

Yes - 12
No - 28

Do you think there should be a provision for this on the card?

Yes - 32
No - 5
No answer - 3

L. Comments:

A note for parents to sign was sent with the card - 3
No signature is a glaring flaw of the card - 2
Should have a tear-off tab or card for signature - 3
Parents should be encouraged to check for progress report - 1
Parents asked if card should be returned - 1
The card should help the child learn responsibility - 1
If parents return card it's more work for the teacher - 1
Didn't know if parents saw card - 1
Should cards be mailed?

M. Have you had any experiences where the parents did not receive the card you sent home?

None - 29
One or two - 5
A few - 1
Many - 0
Don't know - 5

N. If a conference were held after the parent received an Experimental Progress Report Card, did you feel that most parents <u>really</u> understood the comments on the card?

No such conferences held - 31
Yes, most parents understood - 7
No, most parents did not understand - 1
Not completed - 1

O. Have many parents asked for clarification of the Experimental Progress Report, or did just a few, or didn't any?

Many -30
Just a few - 9
None - 0
Blank - 1

<u>N. Comments :</u>

The card was not discussed - 1
Parent highly complimentary of report - 1
Would have had questions if conference was held - 1
Should have conference after card - 1
No communication after the card - 1
Good response from parents - 1
I had conferences before card - 3
Parents want A,B,C,Ds - 1
Question on the reading level - 1

P. Were there any specific aspects of the report which seemed to cause confusion among parents?

No - 29
Yes - 8
Don't know - 2
Blank - 1

Which aspects?

Reading - 2
Achievement level - 3
Math level request - 1
Whether card should be returned - 1

Q. Did parents have difficulty in understanding comments on any of the curriculum areas or not? What about Reading? Did parents have any difficulty in understanding the comments on Reading?

	Yes -Difficulty	No Difficulty
Reading	3	21
Language Arts	1	22
Mathematics	2	22
Social and Physical Sciences	3	19
Music and Art	1	21
Physical and personal development	2	20

No comments from parents - 4
Blank - 7
Don't know - 8
Music, art, and phy ed and personal development not in CP program - 1

R. Did parents have any difficulty in understanding the information on the Reading Series and the Reading Level or not?

Yes, most had difficulty - 1
Yes, some had difficulty - 5
No - 17
Other answer - 13
Blank - 4

Comments:
Reading level - 1
No feedback - 13

S. Did you find that some curriculum areas were more difficult to make comments on than others?

Yes - 34
No - 6

Which areas presented particular difficulty and why do you think they did?

Reading - 5
Language arts - 3
Math - 2
Social and Physical Sciences - 10
Music and Art - 12
Physical and personal development - 13

Comments:
Need a checklist for consistency in reading, language and math - 2
Special teachers for music, art and phy ed - 2
More space needed on card - 1
Parents not interested in music and art - 1
Hard in non-graded situation - 2

T. Did you feel that there were some comments about the child which you would rather not write on the Progress Report, but which you would prefer to cover in a conference?

Yes - 30
No - 9
Blank - 1

Comments:
Health problem - 1
Stealing - 1
Students at conferences - 1
Behavior problems - 4
Hard to comment on special areas - 2
Negative comments difficult - 3
Need space for examples - 1
Physical and personal development - 2
Better said at conferences - 9
Academic problems - 2

Teacher Survey

U. Do you feel that this reporting system is a practical one?

Yes - 6
No - 28
Yes and No - 2
Blank - 4

Comments:

Too time consuming - 29
Revisions needed - 3
Good personal touch - 2
Good for parents - 1
Generally, not comprehensive enough - 2
Not good for parents - 1
Format unsuitable - 1
Needs checklist - 1
Too hard to make three copies - 1
Need extra time off to complete them - 1
Achievement level needed - 1

V. About how long, on the average, does it take you to complete one progress report?

5-10 minutes - 1
10-20 min. 3
20-30 min 11
30 minutes 6
30-45 min. 6
45-60 min. 7
1 hour 2
1+ hours 3
No answer 1

W. Were you able to communicate truly individualized judgments about each child, or did you find yourself repeatedly using "stock" phrases?

Individual - 8
Stock - 4
Mixed 30
Blank 1

X. How is your school organized?

K-6 19
CP Primary 9
Other 2 (Team teaching)
CP Intermediate - 9
Blank - 1

Y. How did the organization of the school personnel affect your use of the card?

Sent information around to the different teachers - 8
Hard to record data - many teachers involved - 7
Pilot usage - 1
Didn't affect - 4
Made it harder - 2
No answer - 18

Z. Did you receive adequate instructions on how to use the Experimental Progress Report?

No instructions received - - 0
Instructions were not adequate - 4
Instructions adequate - 35
Blank - 1

Comments:
Sufficient answers not available - 1
No extra time given - 2
Wording in handbook not for parents - 1
Dr. Carlson and principal explained - 3

AA. In what way did you use the Teacher Handbook?

Never got one - 3
Didn't use it - 6
As a general reference - 20
As a source for specific comments - 17
Blank - 1

BB - How long have you been teaching ?

First year - 1
2-3 years - 8
4 or more years - 30
Blank - 1

CC. Have you had experience using the old (Minneapolis) card as well as this Experimental Card?

Yes - 38
No - 1
Blank - 1

DD. (If Yes) which card do you think parents prefer?

Old - 7
Experimental - 11
Neither - 6
Other - 5 (A,B,C,D, - 3; Conferences - 2)
Blank - 11

Comments:
Parents like A,B,C,Ds - 2
Don't know - 7
Need checklist on Experimental card - 1

EE. Were there some things on the old card you liked which are not on the Experimental card:

Yes: 31
No - 5
Blank - 4

Describe:
Health items - 2
Habits and attitudes - 5
The right side of the old card - 1
Need checklist - 16
All of it - 1
Parent feedback - 1
Social and personal aspects - 2
Math grade level - 1

FF. Are there things on the Experimental Card you like which were not on the old card?

Yes - 25
No - 12
Blank - 3

Describe:
Individual and personal comments - 5
More specific - 6
More space to elaborate - 4
No grade level - 1
Better progress record - 1
More descriptive - 2
Reading level - 4
More child-related - 1
Would like a combination of the old and new - 1

GG. Do you feel that there is a basically different philosophy underlying the use of this card compared with the old card?

Yes - 24
No - 12
Blank - 4

Describe:
To explain progress - 2
Defining - 1
My belief is not important - 1
Personal, individual - 11
No comparison or grading - 7
Subjective - 1
Positive emphasis - 2
O.K. for ambitious child - 1

Do you agree with the philosophy or not?

Yes - 21
No - 6
Blank - 12
Yes and No - 1

HH. Which card, the old or the Experimental, provides the better parent-teacher communications?

Old - 14
New 14
Neither - 7
Same - 1
Don't know - 2
Blank - 2

Which card do you prefer to use?

Old - 18
New - 8
Combination of the two - 8
Neither - 4
Blank 2

Why?
I like the new card with some revisions - 1
Old card does not allow parent-teacher communication - 1
New - remarks can be qualified - 1
New - gives better report - 3
New - better for Gontinuous Progress Intermediate - 1
Neither applies to CPP - 1
Old - not forced to comment when unnecessary - 1
Old - Checklist - 2
Old - covers all areas - 3
Old - less time consuming and less writing - 9
Old - easier to see strengths and weaknesses - 1
Old - more specific - 1

Teacher Survey

II. Would you like to continue using:

This report - 5
The old report - 8
Some other kind of report - 24
This and another kind - 1
Blank - 2

Describe:

Combination of two reports - 4
Old, with "I" for improvement - 1
Letter values - 1
Personal and academic checklist - 3
Comments on reading, language arts and math - checklist for other areas - 4
Individual conferences - 2
This report, revised - 1
Individualized reporting, with time allowance for teachers - 3
Reference: Fridley School card (elementary) - 1
Old with space for reading and math comments; space for other comments - 2
Change "N" and "S" to check report - allow space between sections for comments - 1
Combined checklist and written report - 5
Old report - (Note Ladies Home Journal article, March, 1972) - 1
2 individual and 1 group conference - 1
Use new report; group language and social studies together; omit music and art section - 1

School

Teacher

Grade and Room Number

1. Parent Name

   Address

   Phone

   Child's name

   Person attending conference

2. Parent Name

   Address

   Phone

   Child's name

   Person attending conference

3. Parent Name

   Address

   Phone

   Child's name

   Person attending conference

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